

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-10 IO-03 ISO-00 SS-14 SP-02 NSC-07 L-02

EB-03 CIEP-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 688

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USDOC WASHDC

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12221

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, XF

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF US POLICY ON ARAB BOYCOTT

1. IN LIGHT OF THE PRECIPITOUS INCREASE IN THE IMPORTANCE
OF THE ARAB WORLD MARKET TO THE US EXPORTER AND INVESTOR,
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WE BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE OPPORTUNE FOR A REVIEW TO BE MADE

OF US POLICY ON THE ARAB BOYCOTT IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, WOULD BE IN OUR INTEREST EITHER NOW OR IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE. SUCH A REVIEW COULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LEGISLATION OR, MORE MODESTLY, POSSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE RELAXATIONS WITHIN THE EXISTING STATUTORY FRAMEWORK. REGARDING THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE, COULD, FOR EXAMPLE, SOME SORT OF DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN EMBASSIES AND THE BOYCOTT OFFICE BE ESTABLISHED, OR COULD THE REGULATIONS GOVERNING PRIVATE BUSINESS CONTACTS WITH THE BOYCOTT OFFICE BE MODIFIED.

2. WITH RESPECT TO EMBASSY CONTACT WITH THE BOYCOTT OFFICE, WE CONCEDE THAT, AT THIS JUNCTURE, IT MIGHT NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST TO GIVE THE BOYCOTT OFFICE THE ADDITIONAL PRESTIGE DIRECT CONTACT WOULD BRING ABOUT, EVEN THOUGH OBTAINING FACTUAL INFORMATION ON BOYCOTT MATTERS WOULD BE FACILITATED. WE CONCEDE FURTHER THAT A BASIC CHANGE ON OUR PART AT THIS TIME MIGHT WEAKEN RATHER THAN STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF MORE MODERATE ARAB ELEMENTS AGAINST THE CENTRAL BOYCOTT OFFICE (AND IRAQI) HARD-LINERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SITUATION IS RAPIDLY CHANGING AND WE MIGHT WELL FIND IT IN OUR INTEREST TO BE ABLE TO AUTHORIZE A LESS NEGATIVE APPROACH IN THE NEAR FUTURE IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN TO ASSIST IN BRINGING ABOUT MORE MODERATE POSITIONS ON THE ARAB SIDE.

3. THE QUESTION OF HAVING A LOOK AT THE PROCEDURES GOVERNING APPROACHES BY US BUSINESS FIRMS TO THE BOYCOTT OFFICE SEEMS TO BE MORE PRESSING, FOR THERE ARE ALREADY AN INCREASING NUMBER OF US FIRMS WHOSE CONTINUED ACCESS OR RE-ACCESS TO THE ARAB MARKETS DEPENDS ON FAIRLY CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THIS OFFICE.

4. WE ARE WELL AWARE OF OTHER POLITICAL FACTORS INVOLVED IN RELAXATION BUT FOR REASONS GIVEN ABOVE RECOMMEND WE AT LEAST REVIEW BOYCOTT POLICY TO DETERMINE IF MORE FLEXIBILITY IN ITS ADMINISTRATION IS NOT POSSIBLE.
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